

REMARKS

Claims 1-5 have been examined. Claims 1-3 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), and claims 4 and 5 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

I. Objection to the claims

The Examiner has objected to claim 4 because it contains a typographical error. Since claim 4 has been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, the objection is moot.

II. Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 5,995,479 to Takizawa et al. (“Takizawa”)

Claims 1-3 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Takizawa. Applicants submit that the claims are patentable over the reference.

A. Claim 1

Claim 1 comprises a second support member and a third elastic support member. The second support member supports an end portion of a feed screw, and the third elastic support member supports the second support member, and an end portion of the third support member are fixed on a base plate. On the other hand, Takizawa does not suggest the features above.

The Examiner contends that Fig. 7 of Takizawa shows a second support member (*i.e.*, the sub-frame 26) and a third elastic support member (*i.e.*, the spring 24). However, the spring 24 is not fixed on the base plate 43, and thus, the spring 24 cannot suggest the third elastic support member recited in claim 1. Accordingly, Applicants submit that claim 1 is patentable over Takizawa.

B. Claims 2 and 3

Since claims 2 and 3 depend upon claim 1, Applicants submit that they are patentable at least by virtue of their dependency.

III. Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Takizawa and U.S. Pub. No. 2001/0022772 to Moriyama (“Moriyama”)

Claims 4 and 5 have been rejected as being unpatentable over Takizawa and Moriyama. Since claim 4 has been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, the rejection of the claim is moot. Also, since claim 5 depends upon claim 1, and since Moriyama does not cure the deficient teachings of Takizawa with respect to claim 1, Applicants submit that claim 5 is patentable at least by virtue of its dependency.

IV. Newly added claims

Applicant has added new claims 6-23 to provide more varied protection for the present invention. Since claim 6 contains features that are similar to the features discussed above in conjunction with claim 1, Applicants submit that the claim is patentable. Also, Takizawa and Moriyama (alone or in combination) do not suggest at least (1) a first elastic member that supports a feed screw and that is fixed to a base and (2) a mechanical skew adjuster that supports the first elastic member from a side of the first elastic member that is opposite to a side of the first elastic member facing the feed screw. Also, since claims 7-18 and 20-23 depend upon claim 1 or 19, Applicants submit that they are patentable at least by virtue of their dependency.

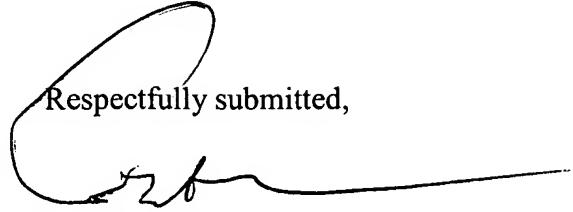
V. Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
U.S. Appln. No. 10/633,667

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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